

Chapter 2

Towards a Widely Acceptable Framework for the Study of Personal Well-Being

Sam Wren-Lewis

2.1 Introduction

The studies of subjective well-being (SWB) and eudaimonic well-being (EWB) both aim to measure people's well-being through measuring their mental states. I will refer to both areas of study combined as the study of *personal well-being* (PWB).¹ Findings from the burgeoning study of PWB are both interesting and important for the following reason: PWB seems to be closely related to well-being. We care about our own well-being and the well-being of others. It is not surprising, therefore, that findings from the study of PWB are beginning to attract the attention of the media, laypersons, caregivers, developmental organisations and public policy practitioners. The UK government, for instance, has recently commissioned the collection of national personal well-being data to be used alongside traditional economic measures in monitoring the nation's progress.

It is widely accepted that subjective measures of well-being have the potential to provide us with useful information about how well people are doing. Thus, we can say that the study of PWB is *prudentially relevant*. Yet, how PWB and well-being are related is both unclear and controversial. What exactly can we tell about a person's well-being from their mental states, such as their life satisfaction, affect balance, sense of growth, belongingness, competence, autonomy, etc.? Can we conclude that someone who is happy is doing well, or at least doing well in some important respect? In order to answer these kinds of questions, we need a *prudential framework* for the study of PWB—a framework that consists in an account of how PWB is related to well-being.

¹ This use of terminology is in-line with the UK's National Well-being Programme, which refers to subjective measures of well-being (which includes measures of SWB and EWB) as measures of "personal well-being" (Oguz et al. 2013).

S. Wren-Lewis (✉)
Inter-Disciplinary Ethics Applied Centre (IDEA CETL), Department of Philosophy,
University of Leeds, Leeds, UK
e-mail: semwrenlewis@gmail.com

In this chapter, I aim to do two things. First, I aim to motivate the need for a *widely acceptable* prudential framework for the study of PWB. I will argue that we need an account of the prudential relevance of PWB that most people can agree on. Without having a widely acceptable account, we cannot effectively or justifiably act on the basis of findings from the study of PWB. Second, I aim to provide such an account. I will argue that a widely acceptable account must be *theory-neutral* with regards to the nature of well-being (i.e. what well-being consists in). Theories of well-being are controversial, and thereby not widely acceptable. According to a theory-neutral account, PWB is prudentially relevant in three important ways: it tends to be (a) an indicator of well-being, (b) a value, and (c) a benefit. In certain contexts, or under certain conditions, PWB may not an indicator of well-being, nor a value nor a benefit. This contextual sensitivity limits the amount we say about the prudential relevance of PWB. However, this limited role is preferable to the current situation of being unable to act either effectively or justifiably on the basis of interesting and important findings from the study of PWB.

In the first main section of this chapter, I will begin by providing a brief overview of subjective measures of well-being and of some significant findings from the study of PWB. I will then look at the current status of the debate over the prudential relevance of PWB. I will show that there is currently no widely held account of the prudential relevance of PWB, and that this situation is not good for the study of PWB. In the second section, I will consider how this situation can be resolved. I will begin by looking at what well-being is. I will argue that, although there is a coherent notion of well-being, there is no widely acceptable philosophical theory of well-being, and thereby no widely acceptable account of how PWB and well-being are related. I will then provide an account of the prudential relevance of PWB that can be widely accepted i.e. an account that does not rely on a theory of well-being. Lastly, I will show that this theory-neutral account can provide us with informative interpretations of findings from the study of PWB.

2.2 The Study of Personal Well-Being—the Current Situation

2.2.1 A Brief Overview of Subjective Measures of Well-Being

In general, measures of PWB aim to measure a subject's well-being from his or her own point of view. This typically includes measures of a subject's (affective and cognitive) evaluations of their own well-being.² There are three main kinds of

² PWB researchers may also aim to measure certain mental states that can be viewed as non-evaluative, such as chronic pleasures and pains. Such mental states may not consist in their subject having some kind of evaluative attitude towards their own well-being. Nonetheless, I think we can make the general claim that PWB researchers aim to measure a subject's (affective and cognitive) evaluations of their own well-being.

measures of PWB: (a) affect balance measures, (b) life and domain satisfaction measures, and (c) eudaimonic measures³:

- Affect balance measures aim to measure a subject's overall balance of positive over negative affective experiences (Kahneman 1999; Kahneman et al. 2004; Frederickson and Losada 2005).
- Life and domain satisfaction measures aim to measure a subject's satisfaction with her overall life and particular life domains respectively (Diener et al. 1985, 2008).
- Eudaimonic measures, or measures of 'psychological well-being', attempt to measure a subject's attitudes towards particularly important aspects of her functioning, such as her sense of growth, purpose, self-acceptance, mastery, and so on (Ryff 1989; Keyes et al. 2002; Ryan and Deci 2001).⁴

Measures of PWB are linked both conceptually and empirically. Empirically, different measures of PWB tend to be highly correlated (Keyes 2002; Kashdan et al. 2008). All three kinds of measures have been shown to share a general factor, suggesting that they can all be viewed as similar measures of well-being. However, once this shared factor has been controlled for, each kind of measure has been shown to correlate with different kinds of external variables related to well-being (Chen et al. 2012). This suggests that, on a general level, each measure of PWB is more similar than different. However, on a more specific level, certain measures of PWB can come apart: some measures of PWB may co-occur with certain kinds of external variables better than others.⁵

Conceptually, measures of PWB typically aim to measure a subject's (affective and cognitive) attitudes towards particular aspects of their own well-being. Measures differ in two important ways: (a) in terms of the kinds of attitudes measured; (b) in terms of the objects of the respective attitudes. For instance, affect balance measures tend to be measures of (a*) a subject's affective attitudes (e.g., positive and negative affective states) in relation to (b*) certain perceived events and activities that constitute a certain period of their life (e.g., in real time, over the past day, in general, and so on). Alternatively, overall life satisfaction measures are

³ Affect balance measures and life and domain satisfaction measures are typically referred to as measures of "subjective well-being" (Deiner & Biswas-Diener 2008). Eudaimonic measures are typically referred to as measures of "eudaimonic well-being" or "psychological well-being" (Ryff 1989; Keyes et al. 2002; Ryan and Deci 2001). As mentioned above, I will refer to all subjective measures of well-being as measures of "personal well-being".

⁴ Measures of "flow"—the mental state associated with "optimal functioning"—can be viewed as a measure of eudaimonic well-being in this sense. States of flow are positive affective states related to successful performance in activities that are challenging, yet not too difficult. It is a particular sense of mastery that arises from the skillful exercise of one's capacities (Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi 1992).

⁵ For instance, when measuring a subject's general well-being, both affect balance and life satisfaction measures tend to be highly correlated. But, measures of affect balance are not significantly correlated with measures of religiosity, and measures of life satisfaction are not significantly correlated with measures of personality and locus of control (Chen et al. 2012).

measures of (a**) a subject's overall judgment in relation to (b**) certain perceived events and activities that constitute their life as a whole.

For each measure of PWB, the objects of the particular attitudes being measured tend to be considered (at least by the subject) to be prudentially relevant. That is, the objects of the attitudes in question concern particular aspects of the subject's life that are related in some way to their well-being. Perhaps the most intuitive way of thinking about this relation is that these aspects concern a subject's *prudential achievements*, namely success in their goals and projects, or in the attainment of other prudential goods (such as health, relationships, education, work, etc.). The awareness of prudential achievements tends to cause us to experience certain kinds of mental states. For example, we may experience positive affect as a result of being aware of having made making progress in one of our life projects. Similarly, our awareness of having attained a basic level of prudential goods may result in us judging our life as a whole to be satisfactory. The point is that these kinds of mental states may be informative in two respects. First, such mental states may be valuable in themselves, perhaps because they feel good or because they enable us to appreciate our lives. Second, the objects of these kinds of mental states tend to *point towards* things that we care about, such as how well we are doing in terms of our goals and projects. In this way, measures of PWB, in general, can be viewed as measuring two important aspects of well-being.

2.2.2 A Very Brief Overview of Some Significant Findings from the Study of PWB

It is worth considering a few key findings from the PWB literature, before looking at the prudential foundations of the study of PWB. Perhaps the most important for our purposes here, are findings concerning the phenomenon of adaptation. Firstly, a set of findings known as the 'Easterlin Paradox' show that, although significant increases in average income correlate with significant increases in average life satisfaction in the short-term, increases in income do not correlate with changes in life satisfaction in the long-term (>10 years) (Easterlin 1974, 2001). In other words, it seems that income makes little difference to certain aspects of our lasting PWB.

Secondly, several findings, which are often used in support of 'set-point theory', show that, although significant changes in certain life conditions (such as winning the lottery, on the up-side, or losing a limb, on the down-side) correlate with significant changes in subjective well-being in the short-term, changes in such life conditions do not correlate with changes in subjective well-being in the long-term (>2 years) (Clark et al. 2008; Heady and Wearing 1989; Lykken 1999). Again, it seems that certain life conditions make little difference to certain aspects of our lasting PWB.

Now, the validity of both the Easterlin Paradox and set point theory has been challenged. With regards to the Easterlin Paradox, Inglehart et al. (2008) have shown that increases in income make a lasting difference to our affect balance, even

if our life satisfaction stays fairly put in the long-run. Additionally, Sacks et al. (2012) have shown that relative increases in income correlate with lasting increases in subjective well-being.⁶ Of course, these challenges have also been challenged themselves (see Easterlin et al. 2010 for some replies).

With regards to set-point theory, Heady et al. (2012) have shown that certain kinds of life conditions do make a lasting difference to subjective well-being. Such conditions tend to concern one's intimate relationships, life goals/values, work-life balance, social participation and healthy lifestyle.⁷ Nonetheless, Luhmann et al. (2012) show that the kinds of life conditions that make a lasting difference to our subjective well-being are not necessarily those that we consider to be most desirable. In support, Wilson and Gilbert (2008) suggest that changes in life conditions that we can readily explain tend not to make a difference to subjective well-being in the long-term, despite the desirability of such conditions. Thus, even a modified version of set-point theory seems significant.

In general, even if we have doubts over the validity of certain SWB findings, such as the Easterlin Paradox and set-point theory, these kinds of findings—if true—seem to be interesting and important. PWB researchers are not without their critics when it comes to the validity of their findings (see, for instance, Johns and Ormerod 2007; for counter-criticisms see Turton 2009). We can think of the validity of PWB research as the extent to which subjective measures of well-being represent that which they purport to represent (Angner 2010). According to this understanding of validity, for instance, measures of positive and negative affect are valid insofar as they accurately measure a subject's positive and negative affect. Now, we may have good reason to doubt the validity of certain PWB measures and findings.⁸ However, in the remainder of this paper, I do not want to focus on the validity of PWB research. Rather, I want to consider the following question: Even if findings from the study of PWB were valid, why would such findings be seemingly interesting and important anyway? The answer to this question concerns the *prudential relevance* of PWB findings, namely the extent to which PWB matters for our well-being.⁹ Understanding the prudential relevance of PWB is difficult—how PWB and well-being are related is unclear and controversial. In the next section, I will show that the current status of the theoretical and public debate around this issue is not fruitful towards the progress of the study of PWB.

⁶ See also Deaton (2010), Veenhoven and Hagerty (2006) and Stevenson and Wolfers (2008) for further critiques of the Easterlin Paradox.

⁷ Though Diener et al. (2006) show that individuals differ in the extent to which certain life conditions caused lasting changes in subjective well-being.

⁸ See, for instance, Haybron (2008) on the limits of self-reports in measuring happiness.

⁹ Of course, PWB may be normatively relevant in certain ways other than its relationship to well-being. For instance, increases in positive affect have been shown to make people more altruistic (Carlson et al. 1988). However, for the purposes of this paper, I restrict my focus just towards the prudential relevance of PWB, that is, the relationship between PWB and well-being.

2.2.3 *Debating the Prudential Relevance of PWB*

In the previous section I hoped to show that the study of PWB has produced several interesting and important findings. Moreover, I emphasised that, even though there are unresolved issues concerning the validity of such findings, we still need a theory of why (valid) PWB research is prudentially relevant. That is, we need to know what the relationship is between PWB and well-being.

Now, by focussing purely on the relationship between PWB and well-being, I do not mean to suggest that individual well-being is the only thing of normative significance. In particular, I do not want to suggest that public policy should be responsive to well-being (Wren-Lewis [forthcoming](#)). There may be certain things that are more valuable than well-being (such as human rights, autonomy, virtue, beauty, and so on), and the promotion of well-being may not be the responsibility of governments (in contrast to the promotion of certain basic liberties and primary goods, for example). Nonetheless, insofar as we do think that well-being is something of value, and insofar as governments are concerned with promoting well-being, we need to think about the relationship between PWB and well-being.

Certainly many people do think that PWB and well-being are closely related. The study of PWB has received considerable media coverage and interest from laypersons (e.g., the ‘Action for Happiness’ movement,¹⁰ the ‘Happy City’ initiative,¹¹ Positive Psychology clubs, and so on). Further, the study of SWB has recently become the focus of public policy with the development of various National Accounts of Well-being around the world (e.g., Bhutan, Canada, Australia, Brazil, etc.), most notably the development of the UK’s National Well-being Programme.¹² The reason behind this flurry of interest is that it matters what makes us happy or satisfied with our lives; in short, PWB is important.

However, there are no consensus views concerning the prudential relevance of PWB. People’s interpretations of findings from the study of PWB, such as those concerning the phenomenon of adaptation, tend to be extremely mixed. For some, PWB research is considered to be of utmost importance, and for that reason should radically inform changes in both public policy and the ways we live our lives. For others, however, PWB research is considered to be fairly trivial, and for that reason can be fairly readily dismissed.

Consider, for instance, people’s reaction to the findings of the Easterlin Paradox. Many PWB researchers have wholeheartedly embraced the findings as showing us what needs to be done in terms of future public policy. For instance, one of the most prominent “happiness economists” Andrew Oswald, in his article in the *Financial Times* entitled, *The Hippies Were Right all Along about Happiness*, ends his discussion of the Easterlin Paradox saying that “Happiness, not economic growth, ought to be the next and more sensible target for the next and more sensible

¹⁰ See <http://www.actionforhappiness.org>.

¹¹ See <http://www.happycity.org>.

¹² See <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/user-guidance/well-being/index.html>.

generation.” (Oswald 2006) These sentiments are echoed throughout the literature. For example, both Richard Layard (2011) and Robert Frank (2001) have proposed that, on the basis of the Easterlin Paradox, governments should increase or introduce new taxes to discourage people pursuing wealth over goods that do bring lasting happiness, such as leisure, relationships, volunteering, and so on.

In response—and not surprisingly—other researchers have hit back at the relevance of the Easterlin Paradox for large-scale changes in public policy (see, for instance, Booth 2012). If increases in average GDP do not make people lastingly better off, this suggests that public policy should focus on other matters beyond growth. But, to those that see economic growth as (at least one of) the most effective ways of improving people’s welfare, such as through alleviating poverty, this seems preposterous. The standard response is that, for the promotion of people’s well-being, “there are more important things than happiness.” If people can be doing badly (e.g. are in poverty), but remain happy all the same, then it seems that we cannot translate PWB findings into judgements about people’s well-being (Sen 1999; Nussbaum 2000).

This is not a good situation for the study of PWB. The divide between proponents and opponents of PWB leaves the rest of us (perhaps most of us) not knowing what to make of PWB findings. Thus, important findings tend to be ignored as a result of being too controversial.

Yet, findings from the study of PWB are interesting and important *in some sense*. This much is not controversial. People tend to disagree, however, in thinking about *how much* and *in what way* PWB is prudentially relevant. What is needed, then, is a widely acceptable prudential framework for the study of PWB. With a widely acceptable framework, the media, laypersons and public policy practitioners alike can begin to interpret, in a noncontroversial way, the prudential relevance of particular findings from the study of PWB. I believe that this can be done and will attempt to set out such a framework in the remainder of this paper.

Before doing so, however, it is worth being clear on why a widely acceptable framework is necessary. Anyone who thought that such agreement is unnecessary is unlikely to be convinced by the arguments in this paper. A stringent hedonist about well-being, for example, may insist that (valid) PWB findings are all that matter for well-being. We should not, according to such a theorist, dumb down our prudential framework for the study of PWB to accommodate people with incorrect views of well-being. The problem with the non-widely acceptable strategy, however, is not necessarily that certain views over the nature of well-being are wrong, but that it does not help us in achieving what we want the study of PWB to do. For PWB findings to be used by laypersons, the less controversial such findings are, the more they can be used. For PWB findings being used in public policy, in the spirit of public liberalism, public policy practitioners should use only widely acceptable findings in evaluating and developing policy. That is, public policy should be based on theories of well-being that all (reasonable and informed) citizens can accept (Rawls 1971; Gaus 2010). It is for these reasons that the normative framework for the study of PWB must be relatively uncontroversial, and thereby widely acceptable.

Lastly, it is important to stress that there is not necessarily any problem with attempting to determine the correct view of the relationship between PWB and well-being. The problem is that attempts to do so have not as yet been successful at being widely acceptable, and such acceptability is necessary for the effective use of PWB findings. Thus, it may be more helpful (both to an eventually acceptable theory and to laypersons and policymakers in the meantime) to start from relatively uncontroversial relationships between PWB and well-being.

In the next main section I will begin by clarifying the notion of well-being, and then show that current philosophical theories of the prudential relevance of PWB are not widely acceptable. In the succeeding section, I will show that, in contrast, PWB is related to well-being in three ways that are widely acceptable. I will argue that these three relationships can adequately form a widely acceptable prudential framework for the study of PWB.

2.3 The Relationship Between PWB and Well-Being

2.3.1 *What Is Well-Being?*

So far, I have assumed that well-being is something of value. We care about the relationship between PWB and well-being because we care about well-being. Most people consider their own and other's well-being to be valuable. For some, well-being is the only thing of final value. The promotion of well-being is one of the primary goals of individuals, caregivers, charities, developmental organisations and public policy practitioners.

Yet, one might reasonably think that the debate over the relationship between PWB and well-being is largely controversial because we do not have a clear idea of what well-being is. Indeed, some philosophers have recently argued either that there are several different notions of well-being or that there is no coherent notion of well-being (Scanlon 1998; Raz 2004; Griffin 2007). In this section I will briefly outline what the notion of well-being consists in, and whether concerns over the coherence of this notion prevent us from determining the prudential relevance of PWB.

The notion of well-being refers to how good a life is, or how well a life is going, *for the subject whose life it is*. On a personal level, our own well-being is what we aim to achieve when we are being "self-interested," "looking out for ourselves," "wanting to get something from a situation," and concerned to know "what's in it for us" (Campbell [forthcoming](#)). When we aim to benefit our lives in some way, we are aiming to increase our well-being. When we think about whether it would be better for us to have a different career, get married, or make some other major life change, then we are thinking about our own well-being. Scanlon states that, "well-being serves as an important basis for the decisions of a single rational individual, at least

for those decisions in which he or she alone is concerned.” (Scanlon 1998: 108)¹³ Thus, well-being is one of the main goals of individuals who care about how well their lives are going *for themselves*.

These self-interested motivations can be contrasted with beneficent behaviour, which aims at achieving what is good *for someone else*. When we care about someone, we want that person’s life to go well for him or her—we care about his or her well-being. When we have considered how to respond to the needs or wants of another person (a dependent, spouse, or friend) for his or her sake, then we have thought about the well-being of others. Scanlon states that, “well-being is what a concerned benefactor, such as a friend or parent, has reason to promote.” (Scanlon 1998: 108) Thus, well-being is one of the main goals of caregivers and of social policy for governments and developmental organisations.

In sum, well-being seems to play an prominent role in our practical lives—in our self- and other-interested deliberation and evaluation. However, upon closer analysis, the role of well-being may be less clear. Some theorists have argued that well-being is a confused concept, which is caught between the concept of a *good life* and a *happy life* (Raz 2004). The good life is one of moral virtue, meaningful relationships and activities, health, aesthetic beauty, spiritual depth, and so on. It consists in all the positive values that enrich one’s life. In contrast, the happy life is one of enjoyment, engagement, satisfaction, fulfilment, contentment, etc. It consists in a psychologically rewarding condition related to things one cares about. The notion of well-being may be a hybrid, “an attempt to find a concept which is half one and half the other” (Raz 2004: 270).

Consider how this analysis applies to the debate over the prudential relevance of PWB. It may be that people tend to disagree over the relationship between PWB and well-being because they are holding different (yet equally confused) notions of well-being. Proponents of the study of PWB may view well-being as something that is closely related to a happy life. In contrast, opponents may view well-being as something that is closely related to a good life. If this is the case, it is understandable that both groups of theorists end up talking past each other. Yet, according to the analysis above, neither view may be right—there is no coherent notion of well-being. Thus, perhaps we should ditch the notion of well-being, think separately about the good life and the happy life, and do well not to muddy the waters in-between.

I think, however, that this analysis goes too far. It assumes that the notion of well-being has no particular theoretical or practical role beyond attempting to

¹³ This is not to say that we necessarily care about our well-being, or that the promotion of our well-being provides us with reasons to act in certain ways. For example, Scanlon explains that, “If you ask me why I listen to music, I may reply that I do so because I enjoy it. If you asked me why that is a reason, the reply “A life that includes enjoyment is a better life” would not be *false*, but it would be rather strange.” (Scanlon 1998: 126) The things we care about (such as enjoyments, success in one’s main aims, and substantive goods such as friendship) are not necessarily desirable because they promote our well-being. These things all contribute towards well-being, but the idea of well-being plays little role in explaining why they are good. Thus, Scanlon labels well-being an “inclusive good”—one that is made up of other things that are good in their own right, not made good by their contributions to it (Scanlon 1998: 127).

straddle the different concepts of a good life and a happy life. But this is not the case. The distinguishing feature of the notion of well-being is that it is *subject-relative*—it concerns what is good *for* someone or something (Sumner 1996). I follow Tiberius (2007) in thinking that we care about subject-relativity because we care about a life that can be *justified* (as a good life) to the person whose life it is. As Tiberius puts it: “To act for your sake, as opposed to acting for morality’s sake or the sake of another person, is to act in a way that I can justify to you in some sense” (Tiberius 2007: 375). It is in this way that the notion of well-being is importantly distinct from concept of a good life. Your life may be justifiable insofar as it is intrinsically valuable (as a result of being morally or aesthetically valuable, say) but this does mean it is justifiably valuable to you. In the case of well-being, the person who must be persuaded of the value of a life is the person whose life it is. They must be able to accept or endorse their life if they were to follow a certain procedure (that does not itself consist in any particular prudential values) (Tiberius 2007).

Similarly, the notion of well-being is importantly distinct from the concept of a happy life. We care about things beyond our experiential lives, such as having genuine friendships, worthwhile achievements, and so on. It may not be justifiable to someone, therefore, that the value of his or her life can be reduced to some kind of favourable psychological condition. In short, it seems that well-being is a coherent concept, which can be distinguished from related concepts in virtue of its subject-relativity. A life of well-being is a life that is justifiably valuable to the person whose life it is. This is not necessarily the case for either a good life or a happy life.

The above discussion does, however, show that it is far from obvious what well-being consists in. It is not obvious what kind of life is justifiably valuable to the person whose life it is. We may be able to agree over what well-being is, yet disagree over its constituents. For instance, some theorists claim that a life of well-being consists in a life of pleasure, while other theorists claim that it consists in a life of virtue. In the next section, I will show there is no widely acceptable philosophical theory of well-being. It is for this reason that the current debate over the prudential relevance of PWB is so controversial.

2.3.2 *Theories of Well-Being*

In this section, I will outline two major disagreements in the philosophical literature that prevent the adoption of a widely acceptable theory of well-being.¹⁴ Without a widely acceptable theory of well-being, it is no surprise that we do not have a widely acceptable account of the prudential relevance of PWB.

¹⁴ I will follow recent work by well-being theorists (e.g. Woodard 2013; Fletcher [forthcoming](#)) in classify philosophical theories of well-being in relation to these two major disagreements. Note that this differs from the traditional method of classification—the tri-partite division of theories of well-being into mental state theories, preference-satisfaction theories and objective list theories—influentially outlined by Derek Parfit (1984).

The first major disagreement in the philosophical literature concerns whether theories of well-being accept or reject what we can refer to as the “experience requirement”. A theory of well-being accepts the experience requirement just in case it claims that, for any subject *S*, the only constituents of *S*’s well-being are *S*’s experiences (Griffin 1986: 13, 16–19; Scanlon 1998: 186–187; Sumner 1996: 127–128). According to such theories, if some fact about my life does not affect my experience, it cannot affect my well-being.

There are intuitively strong arguments both in favour and against the experience requirement. Kagan (1992) makes the following argument in favour of accepting the experience requirement. Something contributes towards a person’s well-being if it is good *for that person*. Persons are nothing other than a body and mind. Thus, according to Kagan, something can only constitute a person’s well-being if it makes a difference to their body or mind. Being genuinely successful, for instance, does not benefit *the person* except insofar as it directly impacts them i.e. through their *experiences* of being successful.

In response, theorists who reject the experience requirement argue that we care about whether we are genuinely successful in such endeavours, not just whether we have certain experiences of success. Moreover, this does not seem to be a mistake. Though-experiments such as Nozick’s experience machine appear to support the idea actual states of affairs may constitute our well-being as well as our experiences (Nozick 1974). We do not seem to think that a life divorced from reality would be a life of well-being.

Clearly, whether or not you accept the experience requirement makes a difference to the prudential relevance of PWB. If a person’s well-being is constituted entirely by their experiences, we may be able to view subjective measures of well-being as direct measures of well-being. In contrast, if a person’s well-being is largely a matter of their actual state of affairs, there may be numerous ways in which PWB and well-being come apart.

The second major disagreement in the philosophical literature concerns whether theories of well-being accept or reject what we can refer to as the “pro-attitude requirement”. A theory accepts the pro-attitude requirement just in case it claims that, for any subject *S*, the only constituents of *S*’s well-being are satisfactions of some (actual or hypothetical) pro-attitude. According to such theories, if I do not have a certain kind of (actual or hypothetical) pro-attitude towards some fact about my life, it cannot affect my well-being.

As with the experience requirement, there are intuitively strong arguments both in favour and against the pro-attitude requirement. In favour of the pro-attitude requirement, it does not seem that certain goods (such as contact with reality, health or long-term relationships) constitute a person’s well-being when that person is (actually or hypothetically) averse to those goods. The goods in question may be good in some other respect, such as morally or aesthetically good, but it seems objectionably paternalistic to insist that they are also good for someone who lacks (or would lack) certain pro-attitudes towards them. Alternatively put, it does not seem that we can justify the value of such goods to people who do not have certain pro-attitudes towards those goods.

In response, theorists who reject the pro-attitude requirement argue that certain goods constitute people's well-being regardless of their attitudes towards them. It seems that goods such as achievements, knowledge, virtue, etc., are valued because they are good for people, rather than being good for people because they are valued. Moreover, people's attitudes are systematically prone to error or bias. Desires and values are formed with limited information, overly influenced by the present, emotionally salient stimuli, and so on (Kahneman, 2011). Appealing to the attitudes that people would have with full information or full rational capacities seems to be either ad hoc or incoherent with the intuitions behind endorsing the pro-attitude requirement (Rosati 1996; Hawkins 2010).

Again, whether or not you accept the pro-attitude requirement makes a difference to the prudential relevance of PWB. If a person's well-being is constituted by goods that they do not have certain pro-attitude towards, their PWB may often come apart from their well-being. A person may have many prudential goods available to them, for example, yet fail to value those goods. In such a case, their level of well-being may be much higher than their level of PWB may suggest.¹⁵

To make things more complicated, one may accept the experience requirement yet reject the pro-attitude requirement, or vice versa. Or one may either accept both requirements or reject both requirements. Any of these theories of well-being are possible, yet all are controversial, and thereby not widely acceptable.

In the next section I will develop an alternative strategy for arriving at a widely acceptable account of the prudential relevance of PWB. This strategy does not involve trying to provide a theory of well-being. Focussing on disagreements over particular requirements for a theory of well-being (such as the experience and pro-attitude requirements) risks masking the areas in which there *is* general agreement. In the next section, I will outline three ways in which PWB is related to well-being. These relationships can be widely accepted, and thereby form a widely acceptable prudential framework for the study of PWB.

2.3.3 A Theory-Neutral Framework for the Study of PWB

In the previous section, I showed that all current theories of well-being are controversial—there are no widely acceptable theories of well-being, and thereby no widely acceptable account of the relationship between PWB and well-being. In this section, I will provide an account of the prudential relevance of PWB that does not rest on a theory of well-being. I will call this a *theory-neutral* framework for the study of PWB. After briefly discussing the commitments of a theory-neutral account, I will outline the relationships between PWB and well-being that make up the theory-neutral framework.

¹⁵ These are the kinds of arguments offered by proponents of PWB in interpreting PWB findings such as the Easterlin paradox (Nussbaum 2000; Sen 1999).

At first glance, it may seem that an account of the prudential relevance of PWB that does not rest on a theory of well-being is paradoxical. For, how can we discover whether or not certain relationships between PWB and well-being hold if we do not know what well-being is? For instance, I will suggest below that PWB tends to indicate well-being. In order to further our understanding of this relationship, we need to investigate the kinds of contexts and conditions in which a subject's attitudes towards her well-being tend to be fairly accurate. But, without referring to a theory of well-being, how can we know whether or not a subject has fairly accurate beliefs in a particular situation or context? It might be, for example, that a happy unhealthy person is systematically deluded over her health, or it might be that her health does not significantly contribute towards her well-being. It seems impossible to decide between these two explanations without a theory of well-being.

In response, I do not think that we need a theory of well-being to interpret these kinds of cases. We already have an adequate understanding of the kinds of ingredients that typically make up well-being. We can reasonably assume that sickness diminishes well-being, for instance. Platitudes concerning what makes people better or worse off do not depend on a philosophical theory that specifies what things are intrinsically good for people and why. Yet such platitudes are informative (Hausman 2012). We do not have to wait for a wildly acceptable theory of well-being before we can venture opinions concerning what makes people's lives better or worse. Such things typically involve certain material living standards, health, education, personal activities including work, social connections and relationships, environment and security (Stiglitz et al. 2009). In general, we know enough about the things that make people better or worse off that we can determine the contexts and conditions in which PWB is related to well-being.

So, what are the widely acceptable relationships between PWB and well-being? In the remainder of this section, I will outline the following three contingent relationships between PWB and well-being:

1. PWB tends to indicate well-being; in this sense, PWB is important in much the same way as other indicators of well-being, such as GDP and social indicators.
2. People tend to care about their own PWB, and the PWB of others; in this sense, PWB is important in much the same way as other goods that people tend to care about, such as health, relationships and leisure.
3. PWB tends to provide people with certain cognitive and motivational benefits, such as being more confident, creative, productive, sociable and healthy, as well as enabling people to value themselves and their lives; in this sense, PWB is important in much the same way as other mental capabilities, such as mental health and self-esteem.

2.3.3.1 PWB as an Indicator

PWB tends to reflect how well we are doing. As mentioned in the first section of this paper, certain mental states, such as affect and life satisfaction, typically *point towards* things that we care about, such as how well we are doing in our objectives, goals, projects, values, and so on. In this way, PWB can be viewed as evidence, or an indicator, of well-being.

Different PWB constructs differ with regards to the aspects of well-being that they tend to reflect. Positive and negative affect can be viewed as more reliably co-occurring with *moment-to-moment changes* in our current goals and projects (Railton 2008; Schroeder 2001; Millgram 2000). We feel good, for example, when recovering from a certain illness, or from receiving a promotion at work. Conversely, we feel bad when we lose a sporting event, or in anticipation of failing to make a particular deadline.

In contrast to positive and negative affect, judgments of life satisfaction can be viewed as more reliably co-occurring with *global changes* in our well-being. Whereas affect correlates with goods such as our health and relationships, life satisfaction has been shown to correlate with success in more long-term goals such as income and educational attainment (Kahneman 2011). This has important implications for the measurement of well-being. If we treat PWB as an indicator of overall well-being, we will need to think about the relative importance of certain momentary and global changes in well-being. For example, Luhmann et al. (2012) have shown that childbirth results in a lasting increase in positive affect (presumably because of the moment-to-moment joys of having children), but lasting decreases in life satisfaction (possibly because of the negative impact of having children on one's career, etc.). In measuring overall well-being, then, we need to think about the impact of certain local changes in well-being (indicated by affect) and certain global changes in well-being (indicated by life satisfaction) within the relevant context.

Lastly, eudaimonic well-being, or 'psychological well-being', differs from both affect balance and life satisfaction insofar as it indicates specifically how well a subject is doing in particular important aspects of their functioning. These aspects tend to include a subject's level of autonomy, growth, purpose, self-acceptance, mastery, and quality relationships (Ryff 1989). This more narrow view of a subject's life can be viewed as either an advantage or a disadvantage. It is advantageous in that a subject's psychological well-being will tend to reflect how well they are doing in some of the most important aspects of their life. Moreover, it will not be distorted by potentially irrelevant factors, such as particular goals and projects that are not in fact good for the subject. However, it is disadvantageous for much the same reason, namely that it will tend to fail to reflect certain aspects of a subject's life that are important for their overall well-being, yet are not related to the particular aspects of functioning measured.

2.3.3.2 PWB as a Value

The fact that most people tend to care about their own PWB, and the PWB of others, is perhaps the most obvious of the three contingent relationships between PWB and well-being. Yet, it is worth exploring this relationship in more detail. The first thing worth mentioning is that people may tend to care about certain PWB constructs more than others. For instance, people may care about affect balance because positive affect feels good and negative affect feels bad. Affect can be viewed as feelings of things as good or bad in a certain way, and it is because these things feel good or bad to us that we can understand affective states to be pleasant or painful (Helm 2009). Although this understanding of the feeling of affect suggests that affective states only feel good or bad because they *represent* something about our lives that is good or bad, this does not take away from the fact that we can begin to care about the feeling of affect itself, as well as the things that affect represents. In this way, individuals typically come to care about their overall affective lives, with a concern for experiencing affective states that feel good over ones that feel bad.

This may not so much be the case with other well-being constructs, however. Judgments of life satisfaction may not feel either good or bad in themselves. Nonetheless, individuals may come to care about being satisfied with their lives, or having a sense of overall fulfilment (Sumner 1996). Thus, people may not come to value their life satisfaction in the same way that they come to value their affect balance (that is, simply because it feels good) but life satisfaction may still come to be valued as a result of wanting to be satisfied with how our lives are going (Tiberius 2008).

The same cannot be said for the construct of psychological well-being. Recall that psychological well-being consist in subject's attitudes towards particular important aspects of her functioning, such as her sense of growth, purpose, self-acceptance, mastery, and so on (Ryff 1989; Keyes 2002). It is unlikely that people will come to value these attitudes beyond the ways in which such attitudes are related to affect balance and life satisfaction. That is, it is not obvious how a sense of well-functioning is valuable beyond the fact that it tends to feel good (i.e., is related to affect balance) or that it consists in the appreciation of a particular aspect of life (i.e., is related to life satisfaction). It is possible that some individuals will come to value a sense of well-functioning in particular, in the same way that individuals may come to care about having a sense of overall fulfilment. In general, however, it seems less likely that psychological well-being will be valued in this way. Thus, unlike affect balance and life satisfaction, most people may not tend to care about their own psychological well-being (above and beyond its relationship to affect balance and life satisfaction).

2.3.3.3 PWB as a Benefit

Perhaps the most important way in which PWB is related to well-being is the fact that it has various cognitive and motivational benefits. People with PWB tend to be more confident, creative, productive, sociable and healthy (Oishi et al. 2007; Lyubomirsky et al. 2005). These traits tend to be beneficial on all plausible theories of well-being.

Positive and negative affect are particularly important in this respect.¹⁶ For instance, Fredrickson (Fredrickson 2006; Fredrickson and Losada 2005) has shown that positive affect, in contrast to negative affect, tends to result in positive outcomes in the long-term, such as high levels of health and productivity. Such findings have inspired the ‘broaden-and-build’ theory of positive affect. According to the broaden-and-build theory, negative affective experiences narrow attention, cognition, and physiology toward coping with an immediate threat or problem. In contrast, positive affective experiences produce novel and broad-ranging thoughts and actions that are usually not critical to one’s immediate survival and well-being. Over time, however, these novel experiences may aggregate into consequential resources that can change people’s lives. Consider the following examples offered by Fredrickson: idle curiosity can become expert knowledge, or affection and shared amusement can become a lifelong supportive relationship. In this way, the broaden-and-build theory suggests that the short-term cognitive and motivational effects of positive affective experiences tend to lead to long-term thriving and well-being.¹⁷

Although these kinds of cognitive and motivational benefits are important, positive affect tends to be beneficial in a more fundamental respect. That is, having a favourable affect balance enables us to *appreciate* our selves and our lives. This is perhaps best illustrated by almost the opposite mental condition, namely depression. Depressed individuals, who suffer from an unfavourable affect balance, often lack a sense of self-worth and find no value in any personal activities. They are unable to appreciate the value of themselves and their lives, and thereby lack the motivation to improve their situation. In contrast, individuals with a favourable affect balance often do have a sense of self-worth, and by extension tend to value their own projects, commitments, contributions to relationships, and so on (Hawkins 2008). In short, positive affect enables people to have sufficient *valuing capacities*, that is, the capacity to form and pursue one’s own conception of the good life.

Life satisfaction can be viewed as similar to affect balance in this respect, though importantly different. Being satisfied with one’s life tends to consist in the appreciation of one’s life. Part of valuing one’s self and one’s life is to be satisfied with it. However, life satisfaction is not merely a judgment of how well our lives are going, but whether our lives are going well *enough* (Haybron 2008). Thus, high levels of

¹⁶ For an excellent overview of the benefits of positive affect see Haybron (forthcoming).

¹⁷ See also Carver (2003).

our life satisfaction may tend to have negative motivational consequences insofar as we judge our lives to be entirely satisfactory. This may result in us failing to be motivated to improve our lives in certain ways. Conversely, low levels of our life satisfaction may tend to have positive motivational consequences insofar as we judge that our lives could be better in certain ways. In sum, the cognitive and motivational benefits of life satisfaction are less straightforward than those of positive and negative affect.

In contrast to life satisfaction, psychological well-being may be crucial in enabling us to have sufficient valuing capacities (that is, to appreciate our selves and our lives). To see why, it is worth considering again the opposite mental condition of depression. Being depressed does not merely consist in having low levels of negative affect. In addition, depressed individuals also tend to have feelings of worthlessness or excessive or inappropriate guilt, a diminished ability to think, concentrate, make decisions, and a diminished interest in all activities (Huppert and So 2013). These factors, in addition to an unfavourable affect balance, prevent depressed individuals from being able to value themselves and their lives. In contrast, individuals with high levels of psychological well-being have a sense of self-acceptance, autonomy, mastery and purpose (Ryff 1989). These factors enable people to have sufficient valuing capacities. Such factors also tend to be general-purpose facilitators for the achievement of values, whatever one's particular values happen to be (Raibley 2012). In short, psychological well-being tends to significantly contribute towards the capacity to form and pursue one's own conception of the good life.

2.3.4 Putting the Account to Work: A Theory-Neutral Framework in Context

We now have a good grasp of the broad ways in which PWB is importantly related to well-being. It is important to note that each of the three relationships outlined above are *defeasible*. That is, even if PWB tends to be related to well-being in these broad ways, it may not be in certain contexts or conditions. Without a theory of well-being, we can merely claim that PWB tends to be prudentially relevant. We need to further investigate the kinds of contexts and conditions in which each of the three relationships outlined above do not hold.

Consider PWB as an indicator of well-being, first. I argued that each PWB construct could be viewed as an indicator of certain aspects of well-being. Nonetheless, there may be certain kinds of contexts or conditions in which each indicator fails to correlate with its respective aspect of well-being. For example, I claimed that affect balance indicates moment-to-moment changes in well-being. Yet, affective states may be elicited by salient information, even if such information is not prudentially relevant. Various self-control problems, such as procrastination and addiction, are cases in point (Rachlin 2004). As another example, I claimed that life

satisfaction indicates more global changes in well-being. Yet, judgments of life satisfaction may be consistently influenced by extraneous factors, such as one's ethical beliefs ("Should I be grateful for, or non-complacent, over the way my life is going?") (Haybron 2008) or a narrow practical perspective ("How can I be satisfied with my life when I have so much work to do?") (Tiberius 2008). In general, there may be many ways in which our well-being and our awareness of our own well-being can come apart.

Now consider PWB as a value. I claimed that people tend to value their own PWB as well as the PWB of others. Firstly, however, there may be significant cross-cultural and demographic variation in the extent to which people value PWB. People from more collectivist cultures, for instance, tend to value group harmony and social cohesion. In contrast, people from more individualistic backgrounds tend to value individual achievement and happiness (Diener and Suh 2000; Jugureanu and Hughes 2010). Secondly, in certain circumstances, people may tend to sacrifice their own PWB in favour of other more important values. For example, the dedicated parent may sacrifice her PWB in favour of looking after her disabled child. Such individuals (as well as individuals with a more 'collectivist' set of values) may in fact come to disvalue their own PWB.

Lastly, consider PWB as beneficial. It is clear that many of the cognitive and motivational benefits of PWB will not tend to be beneficial in certain contexts (Gruber et al. 2011). Optimism is not always the best strategy when the outcomes in question are unrealistic; being confident in a particular activity is not always beneficial when one is unskilled in that activity; and so on. Of course, some benefits of PWB may tend to be more readily beneficial than others, such as health and valuing capacities. Yet, even valuing capacities can fail to be beneficial when they are inappropriately directed towards one's life. A sense of self-worth is important, for instance, but not if it is directed towards harmful activities or outcomes over which one had no part in.

These brief considerations show that focussing on the above three relationships between PWB and well-being opens up a large area of research that needs to be done on the contexts and conditions in which these relationships do not hold. We cannot say with certainty that PWB is prudentially relevant in any given situation or context. Rather, we need to look at each context in detail, and consider whether we have any reason to doubt that PWB is related to well-being in any of the three ways outlined above. Again, these reasons are relatively theory-neutral. We need to know whether subjects have an adequate amount of information within a certain context, for example, or whether they suffer from a particular cognitive bias.

Let us illustrate how this kind of theory-neutral framework would work in practice by returning to the different interpretations of the Easterlin paradox discussed above. Recall that theorists widely disagree over the implications of the findings behind the Easterlin paradox. Those who believe PWB is highly correlated with well-being hold that such findings show lasting well-being has not significantly increased in the past 50 years. Those who believe PWB is less highly correlated with well-being hold that such findings show there is more to lasting well-being than PWB. In contrast to both of these views, the theory-neutral

approach does not make any claims about how closely related PWB is to well-being. It merely claims that (except in certain contexts or conditions) PWB tends to indicate well-being, or is a value or a benefit. I will briefly consider the fact that PWB tends to indicate well-being, here, and the way in which this relationship suggests we should interpret the Easterlin paradox.

I have claimed that PWB tends to indicate well-being, but that in certain contexts and conditions this relationship may not hold. Now, the findings behind the Easterlin paradox (as well as the findings behind the set point theory of PWB) seem to provide us with evidence that there are broad contexts in which PWB does not indicate *absolute levels* of well-being. Seemingly unfortunately individuals, such as poor peasants in India (Sen 1999) or people with severe physical disabilities (Layard 2011) can feel happy, despite their unfavourable conditions. However, this does not mean that PWB fails to indicate well-being in such contexts. Indeed, it seems that such findings provide us with evidence that PWB tends to indicate *improvements* or *worsenings* in well-being. Poor peasants can feel happy insofar as their lives are getting better, even if their absolute level of well-being is dismal. Conversely, seemingly very fortunate individuals (such as healthy, popular millionaires) can feel unhappy insofar as they perceive their lives to be getting worse.

Indeed, additional evidence may further narrow down the contexts in which PWB tends to be an indicator of either (a) absolute levels of well-being, (b) changes in well-being, or (c) rates of change in well-being. Additional evidence, for example, may suggest that, below a certain standard of living, PWB tends to indicate absolute levels of well-being. Above that standard of living, PWB may tend to indicate changes in well-being. Again, this does not require a particular theory of well-being. In order to discover whether or not this is the case, we merely need to assess the contexts and conditions in which the typical ingredients of well-being (health, relationships, leisure, etc.) correlate with PWB.

I believe that this situation would be better than the current status of the debate over the prudential relevance of PWB outlined above. We can move beyond broad controversial theories of the relationship between PWB and well-being towards a more limited, yet widely acceptable, account of the prudential relevance of PWB. We can begin to interpret findings from the study of PWB in ways that will be both effective and justifiable. For instance, the interpretation of the Easterlin paradox offered above is important – it shows that significant increases in standards of living do not result in lasting increases in improvements in well-being. And this interpretation can be widely accepted—it does not consist in viewing PWB as being either too closely or too distantly related to well-being.

2.4 Conclusion

In this paper I have argued in favour of a particular (theory-neutral) prudential framework for the study of PWB. I began by arguing that we need a widely acceptable prudential framework i.e. an account of the prudential relevance of PWB

that most people can agree on. This framework does not currently exist, but needs to in order for important and interesting PWB findings to be used effectively and justifiably.

I then argued that (at least in the foreseeable future) any prudential framework for the study of PWB based on a particular theory of well-being will be overly controversial. Instead, we need to look towards a theory-neutral account of the prudential relevance of PWB. I offered such an account, according to which PWB is important because it tends to be (a) an indicator of well-being, (b) a value, and (c) a benefit. These three relationships can form a widely acceptable prudential framework, which we can use to interpret important findings from the study of PWB.

References

- Angner, E. (2010). Commentary: Valerie Tiberius on well-being for philosophers. *Wellbeing: A Cure-All for the Social Sciences?* Blackwell-Wiley Online Conference. <http://wileyblackwellwellbeing.wordpress.com/2010/11/16/conference-paper-well-being-psychological-research-for-philosophers/#more-451>.
- Booth, P. (Ed.) 2012. *...and the Pursuit of Happiness: Wellbeing and the Role of Government*. London: Institute of Economic Affairs <http://www.iea.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/files/IEA%20Pursuit%20of%20Happiness%20web.pdf>.
- Campbell, S. (2013). An Analysis of Prudential Value. *Utilitas*, 25 (3), 334–354.
- Carlson, M., Charlin, V., & Miller, N. (1988). Positive mood and helping behaviour: A test of six hypotheses. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 55(2), 211–229.
- Carver, C. (2003). Pleasures as a sign you can attend to something else: Placing positive feelings within a general model of affect. *Cognitive & Emotion*, 17(2), 241–261.
- Chen, F., Jing, Y., Hayes, A., & Lee, J. (2012). Two concepts or two approaches? A bifactor analysis of psychological and subjective well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 14(3), 1033–1068.
- Clark, A. E., Diener, E., Georgellis, Y., & Lucas, R. E. (2008). Lags and leads in life satisfaction: A test of the baseline hypothesis. *Economic Journal*, 118, 222–243.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Csikszentmihalyi, I. (Eds.). (1992). *Optimal Experience: Psychological Studies of Flow in Consciousness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Deaton, A. (2010). *Income, aging, health and well-being around the world: Evidence from the Gallup world poll*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 49, 71–75.
- Diener, E., Suh, E. (Eds.). (2000). *Culture and Subjective Well-being*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Diener, E., Lucas, R., & Scollon, C. (2006). Beyond the hedonic treadmill: Revising the adaptation theory of well-being. *American Psychologist*, 61(4), 305–314.
- Diener, E. & Biswas-Diener, R. (2008). *Happiness: Unlocking the Mysteries of Psychological Wealth*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Diener, E. R., Lucas, U. Schimmack, & Helliwell, J. (2008). *Well-being for Public Policy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Easterlin, R. (1974). Does economic growth improve the human lot? Some empirical evidence. *Nations and households in economic growth*, 89, 89–125.
- Easterlin, R. (2001). Income and happiness: Towards a unified theory. *The Economic Journal*, 111 (473), 465–484.
- Easterlin, R., McVey, L., Switek, M., Sawangfa, O., & Zweig, J. (2010). The happiness–income paradox revisited. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 107(52), 22463.

- Fletcher, G., (2013). A Fresh Start for the Objective-List Theory of Well-Being. *Utilitas*, 25(2), 206–220.
- Frank, R. 2001. *Luxury fever: Why money fails to satisfy in an era of excess*. New York City: Simon and Schuster.
- Fredrickson, B. L., & Losada, M. F. (2005). Positive affect and the complex dynamics of human flourishing. *American Psychologist*, 60, 678–686.
- Fredrickson, B. (2006). Unpacking positive emotions: Investigating the seeds of human flourishing. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 1(2), 57–59.
- Gaus, J. (2010). *The Order of Public Reason*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Griffin, J. (1986). *Well-being: its meaning, measurement, and moral importance*. Clarendon Press.
- Griffin, J. (2007). What do happiness studies study? *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 8, 139–148.
- Gruber, J., Mauss, I., & Tamir, M. (2011). A dark side of happiness? How, when, and why happiness is not always good. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 6(3), 222.
- Hausman, D. (2012). Why satisfy preferences? *Papers on economics and evolution*. Available at <http://ideas.repec.org/s/esi/evopap.html>.
- Hawkins, J. (2008). Well-Being, Autonomy, and the Horizon Problem. *Utilitas*, 20(02), 143–168.
- Hawkins, J. (2010). A new theory of well-being. Unpublished paper presented at the annual conference of the *British Society for Ethical Theory*, University of Nottingham, 9 July 2010.
- Haybron, D. 2008. *The pursuit of unhappiness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Haybron, D. (forthcoming). The Value of Positive Emotion: Philosophical Doubts and Reassurances. In J. Gruber, & J. Moskowitz (Eds.), *The Dark and Light Sides of Positive Emotion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Heady, B., & Wearing, A. (1989). Personality, life events and subjective well-being. Towards a dynamic equilibrium model. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 22, 327–349.
- Heady, B., Muffels, R., & Wagner, G. (2012). Choices which change life satisfaction: Similar results for Australia. *Britain and Germany. Social Indicators Research*, 112(3), 725–748.
- Helm, B. (2009). Emotions and motivation: Reconsidering Neo-Jamesian accounts. In P. Goldie (Ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Huppert, F., & So, T. (2013). Flourishing across Europe: Application of a new conceptual framework for defining well-being. *Social Indicators Research*, 110(3), 837–861.
- Inglehart, R., Foa, R., Peterson, C., & Welzel, C. (2008). Development, freedom, and rising happiness: A global perspective (1981–2007). *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 3(4), 264.
- Johns, H., P. Ormerod, and Institute of Economic Affairs. (2007). *Happiness, economics and public policy*. (Vol. 62). London: Institute of Economic Affairs.
- Jugureanu, A., & Hughes, J. (2010). Lay Theories and the Cultural Contingency of Happiness. *ESA Research Network Sociology of Culture* Midterm Conference: Culture & the Making of Worlds.
- Kagan, Shelly. (1992). The limits of well-being. *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 9(2), 169–189.
- Kahneman, D., Krueger A., Schkade, D., Schwartz, N., & Stone, A. (2004) Toward National Well-Being Accounts. *American Economic Review* May, 429–434.
- Kahneman, D. (1999). Objective happiness. In D. Kahneman, E. Diener & N. Schwarz (Eds.), *Well-Being: The Foundations of Hedonic Psychology*, (pp. 3–25). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking Fast and Slow*. London: MacMillan.
- Kashdan, T., Biswas-Diener, R., & King, L. (2008). Reconsidering happiness: The costs of distinguishing between hedonics and eudaimonia. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 3(4), 219–233.
- Keyes, C., Shmotkin, D., & Ryff, C. (2002). Optimizing well-being: The empirical encounter of two traditions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82(6), 1007–1022.
- Keyes, C. (2002). The mental health continuum: From languishing to flourishing in life. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 43, 207–222.
- Layard, R. (2011). *Happiness: Lessons from a new science*. Penguin.

- Luhmann, M., Hofmann, W., Eid, M., & Lucas, R. (2012). Subjective well-being and adaptation to life events: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 102(3), 592–615.
- Lykken, D. (1999). *Happiness: What studies on twins show us about nature, nurture and the happiness set-point*. New York: Golden Books.
- Lyubomirsky, S., King, L., & Diener, E. (2005). The benefits of frequent positive affect: Does happiness lead to success? *Psychological Bulletin*, 131(6), 803.
- Millgram, E. (2000). What's the use of utility? *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 29(2), 113–136.
- Nozick, R. (1974). *Anarchy, state, and utopia*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Nussbaum, M. 2000. *Women and human development: The capabilities approach*. (Vol. 3). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Oguz, S., Merad, S., & Snape, D. (2013). Measuring national well-being—what matters most to personal well-being? <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/wellbeing/measuring-national-well-being/what-matters-most-to-personal-well-being-in-the-uk-/index.html>.
- Oishi, S., Diener, E., & Lucas, R. (2007). The optimum level of well-being: Can people be too happy? *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 2(4), 346–360.
- Oswald, A. (2006). The Hippies were right all along about happiness. *Financial Times*, 19 Jan 2006.
- Parfit, D. (1984). *Reasons and persons*. Oxford University Press.
- Rachlin, H. (2004). *The science of self-control*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Raibley, J. (2012). Happiness is not well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 13(6), 1105–1129.
- Railton, P. (2008). The problem of well-being: respect, equality and the self. *Tenth Conference of the International Society for Utilitarian Studies*.
- Rawls, J. (1971). *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Raz, J. (2004). The role of well-being. *Philosophical Perspectives*, 18(1), 269–294.
- Rosati, C. (1996). Internalism and good for a person. *Ethics*, 106(2).
- Ryan, R., & Deci, E. (2001). On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52(1), 141–166.
- Ryff, C. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations in the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57(6), 1069–1081.
- Sacks, D., Stevenson, B., & Wolfers, J. (2012). The new stylized facts about income and subjective well-being. *Emotion*, 12(6), 1181–1187.
- Scanlon, T. M. (1998). *What we owe to each other*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Schroeder, T. (2001). Pleasure, displeasure and representation. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 31(4), 507–530.
- Sen, A. 1999. *Development as freedom*. Oxford University Press.
- Sinhbabu, N. (Manuscript) The Epistemic Argument for Hedonism. Available at <http://philpapers.org/archive/SINTEA-3.pdf>.
- Stevenson, B., & Wolfers, J. (2008). *Economic growth and subjective well-being: Reassessing the Easterlin Paradox*. National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper No. 14282.
- Stiglitz, J., Sen, A., & Fitoussi, J-P. (2009). Mis-measuring our lives: Why GDP doesn't add up. *Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress*.
- Sumner, L. (1996). *Welfare, happiness, and ethics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tiberius, V. (2007). Substance and procedure in theories of prudential value. *Australian Journal of Philosophy*, 85(3), 373–391.
- Tiberius, V. 2008. *The reflective life: Living wisely within our limits*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Turton, D. (2009). The real dirt on happiness studies. *Real-World Economics Review*, 49, 83–89.
- Veenhoven, R., & Hagerty, M. (2006). Rising happiness in nations 1946–2004: A reply to Easterlin. *Social Indicators Research*, 79(3), 421–436.
- Wilson, T., & Gilbert, D. (2008). Explaining away: A model of affective adaptation. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 3, 370–386.
- Woodard, C. (2013). Classifying theories of welfare. *Philosophical Studies*, 165(3), 787–803.
- Wren-Lewis, S. (2013). Well-being as a Primary Good: Towards a Legitimate Role for Well-being in Public Policy. *Philosophy and Public Policy Quarterly*, 31(2).

Well-Being in Contemporary Society

Søraker, J.H.; Van der Rijt, J.-W.; de Boer, J.; Wong, P.-H.;
Brey, P. (Eds.)

2015, XIV, 236 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-06458-1